

# 2 PEIRCE ROAD

Revival



**Owner:**  
*High Commission of India*

**Architect:**  
*Shing Design Atelier*

**Engineer:**  
*Leng Consultants*

**Contractor:**  
*Towner Construction Pte Ltd*

*D*ilapidated beyond repair, the original tropical Tudorbethan or Black-and-White bungalow had to be skillfully rebuilt. The masterful reinstatement coupled with faithful restoration brought this home, now the India House, to its former glory.

### **True To The Original**

The two-storey bungalow was thought to have been commissioned by the wealthy businessman, Ong Sam Leong, in 1911. Bought over by the Government of India in 1948, part of the house was severely damaged by a fallen tree. Deemed to be structurally unsound, the project team had to revive it by reconstructing it almost to its entirety. The team set the project off on a sound footing with thorough architectural recording and documentation of the existing property and detailed researches into its history.

### **Better Than New**

Original elements and details of the house were reinstated with painstaking faithfulness right down to the decision to reinstate the traditional ceiling design of houses of the same era. Tiles removed from the former living room were reinstalled at the internal courtyard as a permanent keepsake. The extensive use of timber for the verandahs,



*View of Black-and-White bungalow in its setting*

columns and staircases reflected a strong respect for the original fabric of the bungalow. Even, the grand mirror, which was once part of the original decorative scheme, was also restored and retained in the dining room.

New additions were also sensitively introduced. Detailing, such as the installation of sound-insulation under the upper storey timber floorboards, was discretely executed.

### **Extension of the Past**

The project team did an outstanding job in juxtaposing the old and the new, with clever site planning that opens up new outdoor spaces while retaining the unmistakable charm and romance of bygone days. Of note, the new contemporary-style wing added at the rear harmonises well with the architectural language of the original bungalow. The magnificent open-to-sky fountain at the central core of the property and the extensive naturally-ventilated transitional spaces successfully created good visual dialogues between the old and the new.

All in all, a highly commendable and exacting restoration effort that has reawakened this venerated bungalow for a fresh new start.



*Decorative arch moulding & timber bracing at front porch*



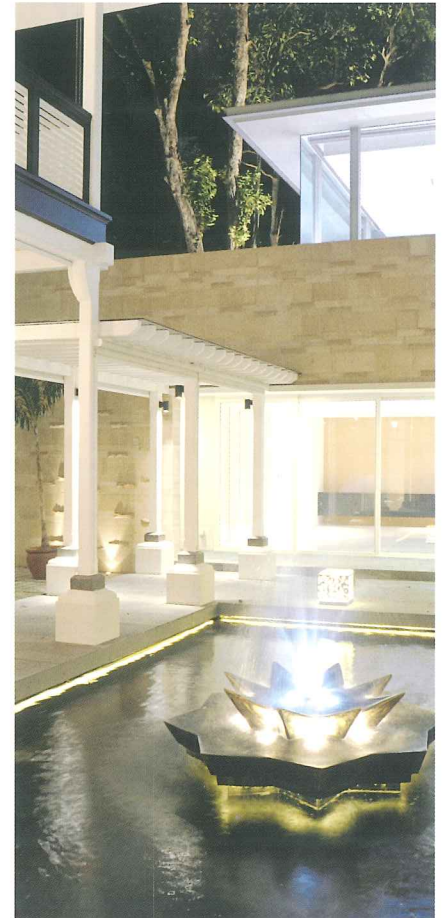
*Porch with original fuel patch*



*Original timber staircase*



*Traditional ceiling design and grand mirror kept*



*Rear extension with interesting water feature*

- Built in approx. 1912 by the Architect, M/s Williams & Steadman;
- Done in the style of "Tropical Tudorbethan": late Victorian vernacular revivalism relocated and reinvented in an Eastern setting.
- First record of a title for the property was in Jun 1854, when the property was in the name of Mustan & Amoo;
- The property was acquired *Mr. Ong Sam Leong* in 1911 and it was believed that the house was commissioned by him;
- The property was given the name "Morningside", 2 Peirce Road;
- Mr. Osborne Robert Sacheveral Bateman, a chartered accountant (Bateman & Co) acquired the property in 1923. (Mr. Bateman's wife, *Mrs. Mary Angela Bateman* was one of the only two female war internee artists that have recorded the sufferings of civilians in World War II Japanese internment camps in the forms of sketches and paintings.)
- In 1947 , the property was sold to *Mr. Loke Wan Tho*, the founder of the Cathay organization;
- Government of India acquired the property, together with the property at Grange Road (the current High Commission of India) and Stevens Road (the staff quarters for the High Commission of India) in 1948.

*Reference:*

- *Black & White, The Singapore House, 1898-1941;*
- *Conveyancing documents from the High Commission of India*